



COMMANDER'S CORNER

Mission First • People Always • One Team

War on terror highlights role of ‘Green Berets’

The Commander's Corner is a weekly feature dedicated to providing information to the Fort Lewis community. This week, Col. Joseph Smith, commander, 1st Special Forces Group, discusses the active role Special Forces has played in Afghanistan, the Philippines and Iraq. Also, the 1st Special Forces Group was designated the first Special Forces unit to be the lead agent in ensuring that SF is able to operate with the new Stryker Brigade Combat Teams.

Lt. Gen. Edward Soriano
Commander
1st Corps and Fort Lewis

The Global War on Terror has highlighted the role that Special Forces has in the pursuit of national military objectives and demonstrated the flexible nature of the “Green Berets” throughout the operational continuum from peace through war. The 1st Special Forces Group has been an active participant in this war, contributing directly or indirectly to the eradication of terrorist groups worldwide. This war comes at a crucial crossroads for the Army, as the force transforms itself to meet the security challenges of the twenty-first century. I would like to briefly discuss the role of SF in general and the 1SFG in particular in the current conflict, and to highlight some of the ongoing

transformation initiatives. The initial operations in the war on terror employed SF in a primarily unilateral role. Operations in Afghanistan demonstrated the effectiveness of Special Forces operational detachment alphas at training and advising military or paramilitary forces. These twelve man detachments brought with them experts in tactics, heavy and light weapons, communications, intelligence, engineering and medicine. One goal of transformation is to improve the ability of the Army to operate in a joint environment, and the efficiency with which these detachments employed Air Force and Navy air assets, is proof that we have made significant advances toward that goal. The expert training and advice of these ODAs, coupled with their ability to leverage joint firepower enabled Afghan forces to break a stalemate that had persisted for several years and to quickly defeat the Taliban regime. The 5th Special Forces Group conducted the majority of this operation, however SF Soldiers from Fort Lewis did participate and tragically the first combat casualty of



Smith

the war was a member of our group. Other examples of SF in a unilateral role during the initial stages of the war on terror are the training conducted in both Georgia and the Philippines. The 1SFG spearheaded the Philippine portion of Operation Enduring Freedom. This is a classic example of the capabilities of SF, as we not only increased the combat effectiveness of the Armed Forces of the Philippines but also enhanced the legitimacy of the Philippine government and the AFP. Through a focused training program stressing human rights and the execution of numerous humanitarian and civic action projects (drilling of potable water wells, construction of schools and clinics and medical treatment) we were able to effectively break the linkage between the local populous and terrorist groups and transfer that support to the Philippine government and the AFP. The operation was a complete success as the AFP drove terrorist groups from Basilan Island and life for the local

population assumed a normal rhythm after years of random terrorist acts. Operation Iraqi Freedom has shown how SF can act in a supporting role for conventional forces. In this ongoing operation, Special Forces have secured key facilities, conducted reconnaissance and surveillance and exploited sensitive targets to assist the conventional forces achieve their military objectives. This role requires detailed coordination between special operations and conventional forces and tests the effectiveness of ongoing transformation initiatives among the various forces within the Army. Everyone on Fort Lewis is certainly aware of the Stryker Brigade Combat Team's pivotal role within the Army transformation. The United States Army Special Forces Command has designated the 1SFG as the lead agent in insuring SF is able to operate side by side with the new SBCTs. The group was an active participant in the training and validation program of the

first SBCT, providing a fully digital special operations command and control element capable of achieving integration between Special Forces and the SBCTs. As the SBCT experiences its first trial by fire in Iraq, 1SFG deployed a liaison element with them to provide for the necessary digital integration with SF. Throughout the Pacific Command area of responsibility the 1SFG continues to conduct numerous activities indirectly related to the prosecution of the war on terror. We are active in multinational and joint exercises with our allies throughout Asia. We execute countless military to military training events to enhance the capabilities of security forces throughout the region, assisting them to secure their national territories thus preventing the incursion of transnational terrorist groups. Special Forces lives by its motto “free the oppressed.” Within the backdrop of the war on terror and Army transformation we will continue to do just that, as we fulfill a pivotal and ever increasing role for our nation's armed forces.

Col. Joseph Smith
Commander
1st Special Forces Group

(Editors note: Next week on Channel 21, Fort Lewis' closed circuit television station features Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Wiles, 1st Military Police Brigade who will discuss the transfer of manning Fort Lewis gates from the military police to a civilian contractor. The interview will be aired Mondays through Sundays, 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m, 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m., and 10:30 p.m.)

RETIREEES

Officer Retirees

Davison, Evon, Chief Warrant Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Corps;
Dressel, Marshall V. C., Colonel, Madigan Army Medical Center;
Head, Robert S., Chief Warrant Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne);
Housley, Robert E., Lt. Colonel MAMC;
Hurrell, Michael W., Chief Warrant Officer, 25th Battalion Support Ord-nance;

Jimenez, Michael L., Lt. Colonel, HHC, 1st Corps;
Kopke, Richard D., Colonel, MAMC;
Laney, Paul J., Chief Warrant Offi-cer, 32nd Combat Services Support;
Rios, David A., Major, MAMC;
Simmons, Darryl, Chief Warrant Officer, 32 CSS;
Terry, Mark A., Chief Warrant Offi-cer, 3rd Battalion, 1SFG(A); and
Turella, Giorgio S., Colonel, MAMC.

STORK REPORT

The following births were recorded at Madigan Army Medical Center:

Adams, Donna and Alevorato, boy, Feb. 29;
Atwood, Misty and Royal, girl, Feb. 15;
Barker, Windy and Bryan, boy, Feb. 29;
Beaty, Sonya and Eric, girl, Feb. 11;
Bowens, Alicia and Marcel, boy, Feb. 24;
Colwell, Michelle and Julian, girl, Feb. 22;
Cooper, Monell and Bryan, girl, Feb. 25;
Cox, Jessica and Joseph, girl, March 3;
Dalby, Teresa and Robert, boy, Feb. 27;
Flores, Lalaine and Jameson, girl, Feb. 20;

Franks, Mylissa and David, girl, Feb. 20;
Frisbie, Angelica and Robert, boy, Feb. 18;
Hunt, Nicole and Andrew, boy, Feb. 26;
Johnson, Bethany and Harry, boy, Feb. 29;
Jones, Melissa and Mark, girl, Feb. 16;
King, Cheryl and Phillip, girl, Feb. 23;
King, Kerry and Jonathan, boy, Feb. 23;
Koehn, Barbara and Dustin, girl, Feb. 25;
Lucero, Paula and LeRoy, girl, Feb. 22;
Muhlenbeck, Diana and Kevin, girl,

March 3;
Pasquale, Jenece and Dominic, girl, Feb. 12;
Perez, Amanda and Rafael, boy, Feb. 19;
Russell, Leah and Rand, boy, Feb. 27;
Smith, Kimberley and Christopher, boy, Feb. 20;
Theis, Jennifer and Bryan, girl, Jan. 19;
Thomas, Amber and Jonnie, boy, Feb. 24;
Turner, Tamara and James, boy, Feb. 4;
Vickery, Michelle and Mark, girl, Feb. 23;
Whiting, Kellie and Curtis, boy, Feb. 25; and
Williams, Stephanie and Michael, boy, Feb. 26.